

What's new for 1997

Both models

- Essentially all-new automobiles, with extensive application of BMW's new intelligent light-weight design
 - New, higher-torque, higher-efficiency engines
 - All Season Traction standard; includes new stabilizing capability for braking while cornering
 - Weight-saving aluminum suspension systems front and rear
 - New front suspension and steering, different for the two models
 - New 4-link integral rear suspension, similar to that of 7 Series
 - Weight-saving aluminum brake components
 - Weight-saving aluminum rear subframe
 - New wheel designs, standard and optional
 - Completely new body with greater passenger space
 - Newly developed Free Form low-beam headlights and foglights, positioned behind glass covers for aerodynamic smoothness
 - Windshield-wiper system with articulated right-side wiper and simplified interval adjustment
 - Available BMW Universal Transmitter (dealer-installed)
 - Power tilt/telescopic steering wheel
 - Outside-temperature display
 - 1-touch lowering and raising of all windows
 - Automatic climate control with separate left/right temperature controls and automatic recirculation control
 - Activated-charcoal microfilter ventilation
 - New in-dash audio unit
 - Available super-premium audio system
 - Steering-wheel controls for cruise control, audio system, air recirculation¹ and available phone system
 - Available BMW On-Board Navigation System (as of 9/96 production)
 - Available 4-way power lumbar support on both front seats
 - Available 16-way Comfort front seats, as in 7 Series
 - Available heated front seats with new continuously variable heating
 - Available heated steering wheel
 - Dual cupholders front and rear
 - Available locking split folding rear seats and ski bag
 - Available power-operated rear sunshade and manual rear side-window sunshades
 - Electric trunk release, operable from interior or remote control
 - 2-step unlocking, operable with key or remote control
 - Multi-function remote control integrated into head of master key
- ¹ - When vehicle is equipped with heated steering wheel, its control replaces that for air circulation

- Interlocking door anchoring system for side impacts
- BMW Advanced Side Airbag Protection (side-impact airbags in front doors); standard in 540i from start of production, standard in 528i as of 9/96 production
- 3-point safety belts and head restraints at all seating positions
- Automatic-locking retractors on all passenger (non-driver) safety belts to facilitate installation of child restraint seats

528i

- Larger, improved 6-cylinder engine: 2.8 liters vs. 2.5 before, torque increased from 184 to 206 lb-ft.
- New control strategy for available automatic transmission, including Adaptive Transmission Control and deletion of console mode switch
- Rack-and-pinion steering with aluminum components
- Aluminum front and rear subframes
- Standard lightweight forged-alloy wheels
- Larger tires (225/60R-15 vs. previous 205/65R-15)
- Available power 2-way moonroof (replaces standard steel sunroof as of 9/96 production)
- Available automatic-dimming inside rearview mirror (dealer-installed)
- Check Control vehicle monitor system with pictogram display
- "Basic" Onboard Computer with liquid-crystal display, standard
- Technical Surface interior trim
- New Premium Package contents
- Theft-deterrent system now standard (includes new remote control described on page 102)

540i

- Larger, improved V-8 engine: 4.4 liters vs. 4.0 before, torque increased from 295 to 310 lb-ft., new silicon-impregnated cylinders replace Galnikal-coated cylinders in aluminum block
- Adaptive Transmission Control refined for improved operation
- 16-in. wheels and tires, all-season tires (automatic transmission)
- 17-in. wheels and tires, performance tires (manual transmission)
- Available manual sports front seats (manual transmission)
- Multi Information Display (MID), similar to that in 7 Series
- Power 2-way moonroof (standard; replaces previous steel sunroof)

As before, two models are offered in the new 5 Series:

528i – Powered by BMW's smooth 2.8-liter inline 6-cylinder engine, the 528i is an exceptional value in the midsize luxury-performance segment. The base model, with leatherette upholstery and Technical Surface interior trim, is the entry-level 5 Series model. Available with 5-speed manual or 4-speed automatic transmission. *Automobile Magazine's* January 1996 verdict on the 528i: "Rides like a 7 Series, handles like a 3 Series."

The August 1996 issue of *Car and Driver*, naming the 528i winner of a 7-car comparison test, put it this way: "When this 528i isn't dazzling with its road savvy, it dazzles with its heavy complement of features...Who says sports cars can't have four doors?"

540i – Powered by a 4.4-liter V-8 engine that is also found in the larger 7 Series, Standard-equipped with the leather- and wood-trimmed interior, the 540i is available with 6-speed manual or 5-speed automatic transmission; for 1998, a Sport Package is newly available with the automatic transmission. *Motor Trend* (July '97) declared, "The awe-inspiring BMW 540i six-speed continues to impress us as the best sedan the world has ever known." *Car and Driver* (December '96) liked the automatic version's "Sporty power and howl, sporty cockpit closeness, sporty feel in the steering and suspension."

What's new for 1998

Both models

- Inflatable Tubular Structure Head Protection System for front passengers; "HPS" lettering on A-pillars
- Available rear-compartment side-impact airbags
- Sport Packages now available for 540i Automatic and 528i
- Shadowline exterior trim on 540i with manual transmission, and with 528i and 540i Sport Packages (matte-black window frames, door sills, bumper rub strips)
- New color: Cashmere Beige
- Foglight lenses now grooved
- Battery Safety Terminal (in severe crash impact, battery connection is severed by a tiny pyrotechnic charge)
- Revised instrument cluster
- Heated rear ventilation added to climate-control system
- Available BMW On-Board Navigation System: TV functions deleted, refinements to system graphics and operation
- Retailer-installed Navigation System also available
- New-generation BMW Cellular Phone Systems for retailer installation:
 - CMT 5000 VR – voice-activated fixed phone system for vehicles produced 3/97 or later
 - CPT 6000 VR – voice-activated in-car/portable phone system for vehicles produced 3/97 or later

528i

- Sport Package, new option for 528i:
 - Sport suspension
 - 17 x 8.0-in. bolted Cross Spoke wheels, 2-piece construction, Style 5; with 235/45R-17 93W tires
 - Metallic paint
 - Shadowline exterior trim (matte-black window frames, door sills, bumper rub strips)
 - Leather interior with Technical Surface trim

540i

- Dynamic Stability Control (DSC): upgraded version of system formerly available only on 750iL and 850Ci; helps driver retain control of vehicle under critical cornering or avoidance conditions (with automatic transmission only)
- 540i with manual transmission available with new optional wheels: 17 x 8.0 front/17 x 9.0 rear, Radial styling, Style 32, with 235/45R-17 front/255/40R-17 rear tires

- 540i with automatic transmission available with Sport Package, which matches certain equipment standard on manual-transmission model as follows:
 - Sport suspension
 - 17 x 8.0-in. wheels, 7 Spoke design, 2-piece construction (cast centers, forged rims), Style 19; with 235/45R-17 93W tires
- Power sport front seats (standard with manual transmission; available with automatic transmission only in combination with Sport Package) (replace former manual sport seats)
- Security Car version (light armored vehicle) available on special order (with automatic transmission only; available beginning 3/98 production). Details concerning the actual level of protection to be provided will be supplied at a later date.

- 540i sedan – 4-door sedan with 4.4-liter V-8 engine. Available with 6-speed manual or 5-speed automatic transmission; different equipment configurations for the two versions.
- 540i sport wagon – 5-door wagon with same engine as 540i sedan. Available with 5-speed automatic transmission only.
- Microperforated leather upholstery (leather standard in 540i models, optional in 528i models)
- Front seat cushions lengthened by 1.5 cm/0.6 in. for greater seating comfort
- New switch panel in center console; switches for available heated front seats now 3-stage, vs. previous continuously variable

What's new for 1999

(as of 9/98 production)

All models

- Improved engines, meeting U.S. LEV (Low Emission Vehicle) emission standards
- Deletion of freewheeling cylinder on ignition/steering-wheel lock
- Dynamic Stability control (standard on 540i models, new option on 528i models) includes new Dynamic Brake Control (DBC), which reinforces driver's pedal effort in emergency braking to help achieve shortest possible stopping distance
- Loss-proof fuel cap (part of LEV emission-control system)
- Car and Key Memory
- 2-stage airbag activation
- Interior motion detector of alarm system now ultrasonic, vs. previous radio-frequency
- Optional Sport Packages incorporate new 3-spoke sport steering wheel
- New Cold Weather Package, including heated front seats and steering wheel, high-pressure headlight cleaning system (Package not available on 540i with manual transmission or in combination with Sport or Sport Premium Packages)
- New stand-alone options:
 - Xenon low-beam headlights with dynamic auto-leveling
 - Park Distance Control

528i sedan

- 2.8-liter 6-cylinder engine extensively evolved, with –
 - Double VANOS¹ steplessly variable valve timing, on intake and exhaust camshafts
 - Aluminum cylinder block, vs. previous cast-iron
 - Dual resonance intake system
 - Electronically controlled engine cooling
 - Newly configured fuel injectors
 - Longer-life sparkplugs
 - Longer oil/filter-change intervals
 - Power increased from 190 hp @ 5300 rpm to 193 @ 5500
 - Engine speed at peak torque reduced from 3950 to 3500 rpm; increased torque at low to medium engine speeds
- Color-keyed high-gloss interior trim, replacing Technical Surface trim on instrument panel, doors and center console
- Optional Sport Package:
 - Power sport seats available in combination with Package
- Optional Premium Package:
 - 16-in. wheels and tires replace 15-in.
 - Auto-dimming inside rearview mirror added to Package
- New optional Sport Premium Package, combining features of Sport and Premium Packages (includes 17-in. wheels and tires of Sport Package)
- Dynamic Stability Control newly available

528i sport wagon

- New model, incorporating all 528i sedan changes
- 5-door sport wagon with following standard features distinguishing it from sedan:
 - Roof rails to accommodate various BMW roof carrier systems
 - Rear-window wiper/washer
 - Standard split folding rear seats and ski bag
 - Velour-lined cargo area with concealed storage compartments
 - Retractable cargo cover
 - Many other detail features that enhance cargo space and versatility
- Self-leveling suspension included in Sport and Sport Premium Packages
- Optional Rear Seat Package, including:
 - Retractable luggage net
 - Manual rear side-window sunshades
- Specific stand-alone sport-wagon options:
 - Self-leveling rear suspension
 - Retractable load floor

540i sedan

- 4.4-liter V-8 engine receives VANOS¹ steplessly variable valve timing on intake camshaft: higher torque (324 lb-ft. @ 3600 rpm vs. previous 310 @ 3900), improved emission control
- New-type alternator: more compact, higher output, liquid cooling, full encapsulation for noise reduction
- Dynamic Stability Control now standard with either transmission (previously automatic only)
- Sport Wheels (optional in 1998 on manual-transmission model only) now standard with manual transmission: 17 x 8.0 front / 17 x 9.0 rear wheels in Radial design, with 235/45R-17 W front / 255/40R-17 W rear performance tires.
- Optional Sport Package:
 - STEPTRONIC² system added to 5-speed automatic transmission
 - Shorter³ final drive ratio for enhanced acceleration response (3.15:1 vs. standard 2.81:1)
 - Torque converter with higher stall speed⁴, also for enhanced acceleration response

540i sport wagon

- New model, incorporating all 540i sedan changes; same distinguishing features as 528i sport wagon
- Standard self-leveling rear suspension
- Standard STEPTRONIC² system and shorter³ final drive ratio; therefore Sport Package does not include these features
- Standard luggage net
- Specific stand-alone sport-wagon options:
 - Retractable load floor
 - Manual rear side-window sunshades (not including sedans' power rear-window sunshade)

1 – VANOS = VAriable NOckenwellen Steuerung = variable camshaft control, or variable valve timing.

2 – BMW's system of manual shift control for an automatic transmission.

3 – "Shorter" gearing means higher engine speed for a given road speed, which leads to livelier acceleration response and a possible increase in both engine sound level and fuel consumption.

4 – Torque converter allows a higher engine speed when accelerating from a standstill, enhancing acceleration response.

- 540i sedan – 4-door sedan with 4.4-liter V-8 engine. Available with 6-speed manual or 5-speed automatic transmission; different equipment configurations for the two versions.
- 540i sport wagon – 5-door wagon with same engine as 540i sedan. Available with 5-speed automatic transmission only.
- New design for keyhead multi-function remote; charges from vehicle electrical system, needs no battery
- Child-seat tether anchors added to rear seats

528i sedan

As of 6/99 production:

- Dynamic Stability Control now standard; was optional in 1999
- Metallic paint now available at no extra cost; was at additional cost in 1999
- Rain-sensing windshield wipers added to Premium and Sport-Premium Packages

As of 9/99 production:

- New STEPTRONIC³ 5-speed automatic transmission

528i sport wagon

As of 6/99 production:

- Dynamic Stability Control now standard; was optional in 1999
- Metallic paint now available at no extra cost; was at additional cost in 1999
- Park Distance Control sensors now painted (center two sensors only)
- Rain-sensing windshield wipers added to Premium and Sport-Premium Packages
- Retractable luggage net added to Premium and Sport-Premium Packages
- Rear Seat Package deleted
- Rear door-window sunshades now a stand-alone option
- Optional retractable load floor deleted

As of 9/99 production:

- New STEPTRONIC³ 5-speed automatic transmission
- Retractable luggage net made standard

1 – Audi A6 2.8 Avant quattro, Mercedes-Benz E 320 4Matic, Saab 9-5 SE and Volvo V70R AWD.

2 – 3/99 running change, 1999 model year.

3 – BMW's system of manual shift control for an automatic transmission.

What's new for 2000

All models

As of 6/99 production unless otherwise noted:

- Rain-sensing windshield wipers newly available or standard
- Sahara Beige Metallic replaces Cashmere Beige Metallic¹
- M 3-spoke sport steering wheel (Sport and Sport-Premium Package, 540i sedan 6-Speed); color stitching deleted
- New steering-column stalks, refined design²
- 2-stage front-impact airbags, with softer deployment for lower-speed impacts (Smart Airbags)³
- Fuel pump switches off automatically after severe crash impact
- Full Maintenance Program for 3 years/36,000 miles made standard (announced 9-1-99, but retroactive to start of model-year 2000 production)

As of 9/99 production:

- New exterior colors: Cosmos Black Metallic, Anthracite Metallic, Royal Red Metallic, Electric Red
- New color for leather interior: Stone Green/Black. Stone Green on seats and door inserts; Black on dash, console, carpet, door ledges and rear package shelf.

540i sedan

As of 6/99 production:

- Xenon headlights with auto-leveling now standard; were optional in 1999
- Rain-sensing windshield wipers, standard
- New wheel option: 17-in. Parallel Spoke wheels available on 540i sedan 6-Speed or Automatic with Sport Package (same differentiated front/rear wheel and tire sizes as Radial wheels of these models)
- Sport front seats now included in Sport Package; previously available as no-cost option in combination with Sport Package

540i sport wagon

As of 6/99 production:

- Xenon headlights with auto-leveling now standard; were optional in 1999
- Rain-sensing windshield wipers, standard
- Park Distance Control sensors now painted (center two sensors only)
- Sport front seats now included in Sport Package; previously available as no-cost option in combination with Sport Package
- Optional retractable load floor deleted

What's new for 2001

All models

As of 9/00 production unless otherwise noted:

- Exterior design freshening, including –
 - New shape for grilles, same as M5
 - New headlights (with lighted rings) and parking lights/turn signals (round, behind clear covers)
 - New bumper/airdam design with round foglights (previously oblong shape)
 - New taillight lenses in "clear" look
 - Clear-lens turn signals front and rear
 - Body-color side moldings (except with Sport Packages, where they remain black)
- New exterior colors, all metallic –
 - Steel Blue
 - Topaz Blue
 - Slate Green
- Deleted exterior colors, all metallic –
 - Biarritz Blue
 - Glacier Green
- Available Park Distance Control now at front and rear of vehicle, vs. rear only
- Dials of main instrument cluster now chrome-ringed
- Solar sensor added to automatic climate control, as earlier in 7 Series
- New, wider monitor (5.7 x 3.2 in., or 6.5-in. diagonal) for available BMW Onboard Navigation System; easier reading. Controls on monitor panel also rearranged

- Standard in-dash audio unit updated
- In-dash single-disc CD player now available (replaces standard cassette deck; available as of 8/00 production)
- Available Cold Weather Package – heated steering wheel deleted and made a stand-alone option so that this Package can be ordered in combination with Sport Package (sport steering wheel of Sport Package not available with heating); heated wheel must be ordered in combination with Cold Weather Package
- Pre-wiring for BMW Cellular Phone System – Mayday function added

As of 12/00 production:

- Sahara Beige Metallic exterior color discontinued

525i sedan

- New model, with 184-hp 2.5-liter engine and equipment adjustments to achieve \$3,500 lower base price than 2000 528i sedan
- Even with lower base price, includes 16-in. wheels (Cross Spoke design, same as previous 528i Premium Package wheels) and tires
- Equipment adjustments:
 - Manual climate control replaces automatic (retains left/right temperature controls)
 - Manual front passenger's seat replaces power
 - These features, plus the BMW Universal Transceiver, are included in a new optional Convenience Package

- The available rear-compartment side-impact airbags now include head protection, previously available only in the 7 Series. They continue to be delivered from the factory with the door airbags de-activated so that customers can choose whether or not to utilize their protection. Available only in combination with moonroof.
- Moonroof added to Sport and Sport-Premium Packages with no price increase; other features deleted from these Packages and not available on the 525i sedan:
 - Rain-sensing windshield wipers
 - Shadowline exterior trim
 - Auto-dimming inside rearview mirror
 - Sport steering wheel
- Stand-alone options not offered:
 - 16-way Comfort power front seats
 - Sport front seats
 - 4-way power lumbar support for front seats
- Front brakes enlarged to same 12.8-in. size as those of 540i models
- 16 x 7.0 Parallel Spoke wheels (new design) with 225/55R-16 95H tires, replacing 15 x 7.0 12-hole wheels with 225/60R-15 96H tires
- New wheel design for Sport Package 17-in. wheels: bolted 2-piece Cross Spoke II, an evolution from 528i's bolted Cross Spoke
- Manual front passenger's seat replaces power to minimize increase in base price
- New optional Convenience Package includes power passenger's seat and BMW Universal Transceiver
- 16-way Comfort power front seats no longer available as stand-alone option, now combined with Universal Transceiver in new Comfort Seats & Convenience Package
- Available rear-compartment side-impact airbags now include head protection, as for 525i sedan

525i sport wagon

- New model, with same changes relative to 2000 528i sport wagon as 525i sedan vs. 2000 528i sedan

530i sedan

- New model, with 225-hp 3.0-liter engine; replaces 528i with 193-hp 2.8-liter engine
- 0-60 mph in 6.8 sec. manual / 7.5 sec. automatic (preliminary data) vs. 528i's 7.0/7.7; EPA mileage 21/30 manual / 18/26 automatic vs. 21/29 manual / 18/26 automatic
- New engine meets Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) standards, vs. previous LEV

540i sedan and sport wagon

- New Radial Spoke standard 16-in. wheels for Automatic model (no change in size from 2000)
- Body-color body-side moldings enhanced with chrome inserts at bottom
- High-gloss Shadowline exterior trim, replacing former matte-black treatment (which continues on 525i/530i models)
- Available rear-compartment side-impact airbags now include head protection (sedan only)
- BMW Universal Transmitter (3-function garage-door opener) now standard (formerly Center-installed)

What's new for 2002

All models

All changes as of 9/01 production unless otherwise noted:

- New exterior colors, all Metallic: Sterling Gray, Black Sapphire, Kalahari Beige and Toledo Blue
- Discontinued exterior colors: Electric Red, Cosmos Black, Orient Blue, Aspen Silver, Siena Red, Royal Red and Anthracite (all Metallic except Electric Red)
- In-dash single-disc CD player now standard; replaces cassette player, which becomes a no-cost option

As of 10/01 production:

- New exterior color: Blue Water Metallic

525i sedan

- Automatic Climate Control made standard (formerly in Convenience Package)
- Power front passenger's seat made standard (formerly in Convenience Package)
- Convenience Package discontinued
- Added Premium Package content:
 - Multi Information Display with premium Onboard Computer
 - BMW Universal Transceiver
- Added or changed Sport Package content:
 - New wheel design, Star Spoke #81; size unchanged at 17 x 8.0
 - Power sport front seats
 - M sport steering wheel
 - Sport-Premium Package discontinued
- Premium and Sport Packages now available in combination with each other

525i sport wagon

All 525i sedan changes, plus –

- Ski bag added to Cold Weather Package; new feature for 5 Series sport wagons

530i sedan

- Power front passenger's seat made standard (formerly in Convenience Package)
- Convenience Package discontinued
- Added Premium Package content:
 - Automatic headlight control
 - Multi Information Display with premium Onboard Computer
 - BMW Universal Transceiver
- Power sport front seats added to Sport Package
- Sport-Premium Package discontinued
- Premium and Sport Packages now available in combination with each other

540i sedan

- New power rating for engine: 290 hp, up from 282
- Automatic headlight control (new feature, standard)

540i sport wagon

All 540i sedan changes, plus –

- Ski bag added to Cold Weather Package; new feature for 5 Series sport wagons